(c) and (d) Yes Sir, In December, 2006 the Government signed an MoU with United Arab Emirates and in April, 2007 with Kuwait. The Ministry has finalized an additional protocol with Qatar to update the 1985 agreement. MoU with Malaysia has been initialed.

(e) The MoU provide for a Joint Working Group to meet twice a year to discuss bilateral issues. This mechanism will be used to enforce the provisions of the MoU.

Contribution to citizen welfare fund

1294. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian immigrants who visit Gulf countries for work are contributing certain amount towards the India citizen welfare fund;

(b) if so, whether the said fund is utilized to repatriate stranded destitute Indians back to their native places and also for chemical embalming of the dead bodies and to handover them to their families;

(c) if so, the details pertaining to total fund collected during the last three years, year-wise; and

(d) the total expenditure incurred and the number of immigrants from Andhra Pradesh provided assistance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED): (a) to (d) The requisite information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Backward region development fund

1295. SHRI B.J.PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have launched a Rs. 3,750 crore Backward Region Development Fund aimed at removing regional imbalance in development and making the rural poor self reliant;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of the districts where this scheme is proposed to be launched in Orissa indicating the details of funds that are proposed to be provided to Orissa for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Backward Regions Grant Fund programme (BRGF) was launched in 2006-07. The Programme has three components, namely Special Plan for Bihar, Special Plan for the KBK districts of Orissa and the district component covered by the Backward Districts Initiative of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY)

subsumed into the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme from 2006-07. Special plans for Bihar and the KBK districts of Orissa are handled by the Planning Commission. The allocation under the district component of BRGF consists of two funding windows (a) fund for capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions and (b) an untied developmental grant. The outlay for the district component under the BRGF during 2006-07 was Rs. 3750 crore and the same is Rs. 4670 crore for 2007-08. The *sine qua non* for the release of grants under BRGF in the preparation of district plans in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Constitution.

(c) Nineteen districts of Orissa, including the KBK districts, namely, Koraput, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Nawrangpur, Raigada, Sonapur, Nuapada and Malkangiri, are covered under the BRGF programme. List is given in the Statement (*See* below). Orissa is entitled to a sum of Rs. 454.26 crore for the Financial Year 2007-08, under the Backward Regions Grant Fund. This includes Rs. 19.00 crore under the component of capacity building, Rs. 130.00 crore under the Special Plan to the eight KBK Districts and the balance Rs. 305.26 crore as untied grant under the district component of the BRGF to all 19 districts covered under BRGF in Orissa, including eight KBK districts.

Statement

List of Districts of Orissa covered under the BRGF

Orissa

1	Bolangir	2	Boudh	3	Debagarh	4	Dhenkanal
5	Gajapati	6	Ganjam	7	Jharsuguda	8	Kalahandi
9	Keonjhar	10	Koraput	11	Malkangiri	12	Mayurbhanj
13	Nabrangpur	14	Nuapada	15	Phulbani	16	Rayagada
17	Sambalpur	18	Sonapur	19	Sundargarh		

India's rank in corruption index

1296. SHRI DARA SINGH:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Transparency International Programme Coordinator for South Asia has reportedly ranked India as among the 'most corrupt societies in world', and adding that no Asian country figures in list of ten cleanest countries;

(b) whether NGO's Bribe Payer's Index, 2006 has reportedly shown that out of 30 countries, surveyed by index, India was worst-most willing world's No. 1 bribe payer and whether Government subscribe this report; and

(c) if so, what corrective measures Government propose to take to remove corruption because India is considered as an 'emerging economy and emerging export power'?